

under the door.
I whisper to my wife
I thought they'd never
find us out here.
She says,
They're everywhere.

AWAY FROM THE HOUSE

He'd been gone over
a week. People said
at his age you
have to expect that.
Still you're not ready
for him when he returns
hair greasy and matted
eyes a little hazy
one ear torn
near the skull.

The next morning the first
signs, a bubble of froth
in the corner of his mouth
dried drivel in his beard
constant pawing at the door.

The vet says it's hours, maybe
minutes before the first snap.
Do I want him to do it?
I laugh. No, of course not.
I've slit the necks
of wounded deer,
slipped the barrel
into the snug hollow
behind a hog's ear.

I open the door, want him
to run far away from
the house, up through
the goldenrod and burdock where I
will have to exhaust
myself to get a clean
shot at him, but he
won't leave,
stretches out on
the picnic table, flexes
his claws and waits
for me to load.